

TOP 40 UNDER 40

Michael B. Lees

Lees considers himself more than a business attorney. “I want to be my clients’ trusted adviser,” he said. Born and raised in San Diego, he went away to college, where he took a double major undergraduate business degree from the University of Arizona. He returned to study law at the University of San Diego School of Law. Then he obtained a master of laws degree in taxation from Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C.

“I’m helping people achieve what they want to do, and it’s fun to be engaged in a nice variety of transactions,” he said. “I ask my clients to think of me as their personal general counsel. I explain that I get to know them and their businesses. Then I am on call, available when they need to do a deal or hire or fire someone or anything at all, really.”

Lees has substantial experience in business, real estate and taxation law. He represents families, individuals and businesses in corporate and transactional matters, as well as both buyers and sellers in acquisitions and divestitures of businesses, real estate and capital assets. He is well versed in preparing and negotiating formation and operative documents for corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies, including complex joint ventures and investment funds. He also represents individuals and families as they achieve their estate planning goals.



Solomon Ward Seidenwurm & Smith LLP

Title: Partner

Age: 39

Lees met his wife in law school; she is now a deputy district attorney. “She deals with rapes and murders. I don’t. I feel like I won that lottery, and it is easier to sleep at night,” he said.

Though he does not practice criminal law, he is there for clients in trouble. “One had a DUI last week — I was the first one he called,” Lees said. “I put him in touch with a lawyer who

could help, trying, as ever to match their personalities.”

Another client, a dentist, recently retired and sold his practice. “I helped him negotiate the purchase agreement with the buyer’s lawyer,” Lees said. “I was able to relieve him of his concern that the buyer would end up unhappy. It was good to be able to tell him, ‘Look, you have completed the sale. Con-

gratulations, you’re done.’”

Lees is a dedicated community volunteer. He is on the board of the Jewish Family Service of San Diego and actively involved in the Scripps Ranch Old Pros. He also serves on the board of the University of Arizona Alumni Association’s San Diego chapter.

— John Roemer